

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

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Ayrshire and Arran team enjoying busy summer

The National Trust for Scotland's new Ayrshire and Arran team are enjoying a busy summer.

General Manager Stuart Maxwell, who took up the role with Scotland's largest conservation charity earlier this year, has now completed recruiting his team of heritage and business specialists.

Together they are playing a key role in caring for some of the treasures of Scotland, including Culzean Castle and Country Park, Brodick Castle, Garden and Country Park and the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, as well as Souter Johnnie's Cottage and the Bachelors' Club.

Based at Culzean Castle, they are enjoying a busy summer, as Culzean Castle and Brodick Castle both benefit from major investment.

General Manager Stuart Maxwell said:

"We've got lots going on in Ayrshire and Arran this summer – our newly opened and expanded playpark, The Wild Woodland and Adventure Cove at Culzean is going down very well with younger visitors, we were overrun with pirates for our flagship Pirates of Culzean event last week, and there's lots of outdoor theatre and rangers' events too. We've also enhanced our catering and retail offer typified with the opening of our new Aviary Café.

"In the stunning grounds of Brodick Castle, we've just opened Isle Be Wild Adventure Playpark – a fantastic play experience, inspired by Arran's wonderful natural heritage. This new addition to the island adds another great reason to make a visit to Arran for families for a short break or a day trip from the mainland."

The team is L – R:

Sarah Beattie, Curator - Sarah studied History of Art and History at the University of Glasgow before completing a master's degree in nineteenth century art and design. She is currently working on a second masters on the history of the Country House with the University of Leicester. Sarah has worked with a

broad selection of collections from social history to fine art in both documentation and curatorial roles.

Kevin MacGillivray, Catering and Hospitality Manager – Kevin has more than 30 years' experience in the catering industry and has won many prestigious awards including *Scottish Chef of the Year*, *Winner of Flavour of Scotland Award*, and *the Scottish Hotel Chef of the Year*. He has been on the board of the Federation of Chefs Scotland since 1999 and took up the office of President in June 2009. Before joining the Trust, he was the Regional Executive Chef for MacDonald Hotels looking after 5 of the company's flag ship properties, The Holyrood Edinburgh, Inchyra Grange, Grangemouth, The Crutherland Hotel in East Kilbride and Houston House Hotel and the Grange Manor.

Ashley Connolly, Retail Development Manager – Ashley has worked in retail for 25 years – 20 of which have been in buying and product development with retail giants like Tesco and Next. Ashley's career growth has come from being able to match products to people, with the customer being at the heart of every decision she makes. Innovative, pioneering and a keen negotiator, Ashley can spot a trend coming from a mile away.

Gareth Clingan, Operations Manager, Culzean Castle – Gareth has worked with NTS since 2009 having held positions at Crathes Castle, Brodie Castle and Culloden amongst others. Previously, Dumfries born Gareth, was Visitor Experience Manager at The Royal Yacht Britannia after working at the Palace of Holyroodhouse.

Stuart Maxwell, General Manager – Stuart is no stranger to Ayrshire having managed Fairfield House Hotel and The Marine Hotel, Troon and lived in Alloway for 10 years. Having spent over 25 years in hospitality he is looking to transform the visitor experience at all of the Ayrshire and Arran properties whilst also opening up opportunities for commercial businesses.

Caroline Smith, Operations Manager, Robert Burns Birthplace Museum – Caroline has worked in the Ayrshire tourism sector since 2000, taking on the role of Commercial Manager and then Property Manager at Burns National Heritage Park (now the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum). Caroline was a key part of the project team for the HLF funded Robert Burns Birthplace Museum which opened in 2010. She then spent 3 years at Culzean Castle & Country Park, during which time she completed several large capital projects including the new play area – Adventure Cove as well as several property renovations and refurbishments, increasing visitor numbers and income, paving the way for further developments such as the extension to the play area and landscape and infrastructure improvements.

Andrea Brown, Business Manager – Andrea began her career in the banking sector during which time she qualified as an Associate member of the Chartered

Institute of bankers in Scotland. She then worked in finance roles in the construction and road haulage industries. She has a particular interest in working for the charity sector, and worked with the Ayrshire Hospice for 13 years, latterly as Corporate & Management Accountant, where she headed up the finance department. During this role, she completed a BSC (Honours) in Applied Accountancy and is a qualified Chartered Certified Accountant.

Tim Keyworth, Gardens and Designed Landscapes Manager – Tim started his career with National Trust for Scotland at Threave Garden where he completed his craftsman gardener award, before moving to Leith Hall to take up a permanent gardening role. At 22, he became the youngest head gardener in the Trust and led a number of important renovations. He then moved to Brodick Castle in 2014, attracted before taking up his current role.

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Editor's Notes:

Images: The team is pictured here: <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/0Y9ntC>

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